

771 new element is however not of major importance; although
 177 religious titles are used in civil life no other distinction is made
 between layman and lamas; the social organisation is confined
 to the monastery. There is a difference in appearance between
 laymen and lamas; laymen wear their hair in a long plait whereas
 lamas have their heads shaved or at least close cropped; and though
 lamas often wear ordinary clothes for field work, on social occasions
 they always wear Tibetan, and not Lepcha dress. But lamas do
 not form a group within the society; the fact that a man is a lama
 is only one of the aspects of his personality, less important than his
 wealth or poverty, his industry or laziness, his relations by kin
 and marriage and friendship with other people. Only in their death
 are lamas given distinguishing treatment; they are usually cremated
 • [766] and never buried, whereas laymen are usually buried and never
 cremated; both laymen and lamas may, if the horoscope indicates
 it, be thrown into the river.

157 As a generalisation it may be said that the Lepchas have accepted
 177 the ritual, the validating mythology, and the organisation of
 771 lamaism; what they have completely refused to accept is the ethic.
 Like the other 'higher religions' lamaism is individualist; it
 holds that a person's chief concern should be with his own spiritual
 welfare. This, the key-concept of lamaism, was and is an alien
 attitude to the Lepchas. As has already been said, the Lepcha
 attitude to disapproved-of acts is social, and not individual; it is
 the society, and not the evil-doer, which bears the brunt of wicked
 [152] acts. The Lepchas admit feelings of shame—feelings so strong that
 they can lead to suicide—following exteriorised social disapproval;
 771 they do not admit guilt-feelings. The more pious lamas and some
 177 laymen accept intellectually the idea of reincarnation, but they do
 not accept emotionally the idea of reincarnation being the result of
 personal acts. The form of reincarnation is discovered from horo-
 scopes, and those depend on the time of birth or death, that is to
 say on chance, and not on individual behaviour. Sin is practically
 equated with the killing of animals; this is felt to be a dangerous
 act and is thoroughly congruent with the Lepchas' inhibition of
 aggression in other spheres of life. But the idea of asceticism, for
 example, being meritorious is so alien to the Lepchas, that even
 pious lamas have confided their private belief that the *gé-long* (as
 the monks who have taken their vows of asceticism are called) get
 their satisfactions on the sly.

I should like to suggest that this selective conversion to a new

755 To a certain extent the employment of lamas or Mun to drive away devils depends on the wishes and wealth of the sufferer or his near relatives; as with us some people are hypochondriac, some people refuse to take even necessary precautions when they are badly ill and some say and feel that they cannot afford the time or money. Some illnesses everybody can diagnose and tell which is the causing demon and what is the necessary curative ceremony, just as many people can recognise and know the treatment of the commoner illnesses. Others are more obscure and consultation has to be made. For the lama there are two possible forms of consultation; he can divine with his rosary, as has already been described, or he can consult the astrological books employed in horoscopes which will tell infallibly what devil on that day would be troubling the person born on the date of the sufferer's birth. In nearly every case a Mun and a lama are consulted simultaneously; should their diagnoses differ a third opinion will be sought and even a fourth and fifth until the Mun and the lama are in agreement as to the cause of the illness and therefore as to its cure. The Mun divines partly by his rosary and partly by *munthen-ing*, that is, communicating with his or her possessing spirit. Very often before consultation with a Mun consultation will be made with a layman who possesses a rosary and knows how to use it to discover which Mun—or rather the Mun born in which year—will be most suitable to deal with this particular patient.

[77] The fear of illness and the ceremonies against it form by far the largest impact of religion on the life of the average Lepcha; a lama is far more a doctor than he is a priest in his function. Medicine in our sense of the word plays no rôle in the lama's cures; the patient is given no drugs of any sort to take; the cause of all illnesses and misfortunes is considered to be supernatural and therefore only supernatural methods are suitable for dealing with them. The Lepchas' knowledge of drugs is anyhow very slight but those who do know medicinal herbs can employ them without any form of ceremony. Religious consultation is very seldom held 858 in the case of the illness of infants or young children; if a child 855 is badly ill the most usual form of cure is to try a change of air, to take the child on a visit to the house of some relative—usually a relative by marriage, either the wife's parents or the wife's brothers. Children until they achieve complete physical independence are 766 barely considered as fully human; they are not given any burial ceremony nor are they the subject of other ceremonies. Children

152 by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing
 201 stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property,
 and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones
 at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things
 [231] at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into culti-
 vated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel.
Shadong ding is considered to be a natural and almost automatic
 state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice
 is paid to a person in a temper.

152 Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not
 157 equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing
 nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness
 varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened
 of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies
 of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot
 even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness
 is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed
 for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a
 [766] pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done
 before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made
 fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some
 admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather
 similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of
 guts'.

152 The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They
 [515] will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will
 merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People
 [854] will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen
 women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough
 in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no
 841 disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the
 152 menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans
 515 or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not
 debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always
 wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect
 to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are
 far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the
 Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy,
 515 but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas them-
 selves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen;
 lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

289

597 Milk may also be given to such orphans by the feeder taking it
 853 into his or her mouth and squirting it into the baby's. Two boys
 in Lingthem were artificially reared in this way. If the mother and
 child both die the child is placed in the mother's lap before the
 [166] body is disposed of; similarly if the mother dies in the last months
 of pregnancy the foetus is ripped out and placed on her lap before
 burning or burial.

844 Children normally witness the birth of subsequent siblings and
 864 of other children born in the house. Except for one nervous
 adult, Jiroong, who said he was frightened when his younger sister
 was born, children do not seem to regard child-birth with any deep
 emotion. Twelve-year-old Ribu voiced the general sentiment
 when he said that during birth he was not frightened, though he
 was anxious for his mother. Children take birth in a very matter-
 of-fact way; 'first of all a woman becomes pregnant and then she
 puts out a child'. Only adopted children or only children who have
 not had occasion to witness child-birth surround the situation with
 any emotion or curiosity.²

ii

846 For the first three days of life the baby is considered to be still
 in the womb and all the pre-natal precautions have to be observed.
 It is not even referred to as a human child; it is called a rat-child.
 During those three days the mother must on no account touch the
 ground; were she to do so the blood clot would not descend. The
 father may go out but must not do heavy work such as lifting stones
 or cutting trees; such actions would cause the woman pain in her
 belly. Also nobody except those who live in the house must
 enter the house or see the child; should they do so the mother will
 have terrible pains. If the mother has recovered she can do ordinary
 household work. After the birth feast on the third day the mother
 may go outside as soon as she feels that she is strong enough to do
 so; no ceremony marks the first going out of a newly delivered
 mother, though for the first month she is fed on a special
 strengthening diet of chicken soup and extra strong *chi*.

[783] On the third day the baby is officially born and a special birth
 feast is held for it. Before strangers enter the house the floors are
 scrubbed with wormwood plants, and incense burnt, and every
 member of the house washes his body, first in hot water indoors,
 and then in a stream, and also his clothes, to remove the uncleanness
 of birth.

² See Chapter Fifteen, p. 390.

858 as with us, almost a different species with their special 'childish' rules of conduct and ways of thought. It follows that—save perhaps individually in the immediate post-infancy period—childishness is not considered an excuse either for anti-social behaviour or for stupidity; a child is capable of committing crimes as much as an adult is, and may be punished as severely, though in different ways; and, judged by adult standards, their conversation is stupid and largely meaningless.

But although in one way adults regard children as potentially small adults, they have a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards them. Children are not quite human. If they survive they will turn into proper members of society; but if they die they will turn into particularly malevolent devils—*num-een moong*. There is no assurance of survival, either realistically or supernaturally; the horoscopes always hedge on this point: 'Should he survive his tenth day, his tenth month and his ninth year . . . he will live to be seventy-one.' A child who dies before about his tenth year is treated very differently to an adult; no funeral ceremonies are held for it and the body is thrown unceremoniously into the river; but elaborate apotropaic ceremonies are performed⁶ to ward away its ghost-devil; and even should a child die at a distance these apotropaic ceremonies are performed, whereas for dead adults who die abroad no sort of funeral service is performed. The more attached a child was to his home and family, the more vigorously will his *num-een moong* attempt to reduce the other members to the same state as itself. Consequently a child represents potential supernatural danger. A dead infant turns into *ing-bong moong*, which is far less dangerous and much easier to get rid of.

The attitude of parents towards a child between the ages of about four and ten are therefore twofold: the child is a potential adult, but one in need of training and education to make him a socially valuable adult; at the same time the child is a potential source of supernatural danger, and as such it would be uneconomical to lavish too much affection on it. Should the child live it will be a great source of comfort and help; should it die it would be a source of great danger; the two contingencies must be taken into account. Finally, in the present a young child is often a nuisance and always an expense.

Some time between the child's third and fifth year—usually about the age of four—a child's achievement of physical indepen-

⁶ See Chapter Thirteen, p. 352-353, also Chapter Eight, p. 233.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEATH

i

761 Death is the real enemy of Lepcha life. Disease and hail and failure of crops occupy the Lepchas more emotionally, for these are possibly preventable accidents and against them precautions can be taken. But death is absolute and final and cannot be fought against; some precautions can be taken against a death which has struck one member finding other victims in the community, but against death itself there is nothing to do. Death is too terrible to envisage clearly or discuss often; death, and, to a lesser extent, the dead who have suffered death are hated and feared and not talked about.

764 Once a person is dead there are two things to do; the danger of the devil that has caused his death finding another victim in the community must be averted and the dead man must be got rid of as thoroughly and completely as possible. People who have left this world never return to it benevolently; if they do have any contact with the living it is as malevolent supernaturals, as devils. The older a person grows the less likely is he to hanker after the world he has left and therefore the less he is to be feared; children and young people suddenly torn from their life will surely turn into malevolent devils.

766 The infection and danger of death is strictly local and therefore if a person dies away from home no sort of ceremony is held for him; the body is just unceremoniously thrown into the river. Why should strangers be at the expense of a funeral? No relics will be returned. When the survivors hear of the distant death of a relative they will simply set up prayer flags. They will not hold a *sanglion* (death ceremony), for if the soul has turned into a *moong* it will haunt the place where it died and will not trouble them. That the soul of the dear departed will not be able to find its way to the *rumlyang* (paradise) does not matter. The ceremonies

● 766 to be described later are more for a protection for the living than as a help for the dead. Only if a young child were to die away from its home would the ceremony of Dek Flee¹ be held to keep away its haunting demon.

775 It is at death and the ceremonies which surround death that
764 the beliefs and ritual of the Mun and lamas most obviously clash and contradict one another. Both creeds hold that the soul outside the body is lost in some dangerous region through which it must be conducted; and therefore representatives of both creeds help to conduct the soul away. But the soul's destination on these wanderings is completely different; for the lama the soul wanders for forty-nine days in a sort of purgatory, after which it is judged and rewarded and sent on to its next incarnation, whether it be on the earth as another human being or as an animal or to heaven for a period of blessedness or to hell for a period of torment. For the Mun the soul is conducted to the *rumlyang*, where it is born again as a tiny child, very often of a different sex to its former life; in the *rumlyang* the child grows up to maturity and leads a happy and immortal life among all the other dead, a life similar to that here on earth except that there is no death or disease or want.

The implicit contradictions in these beliefs are realised in the case of lamas and nuns, for whom the Mun perform no ceremonies; the souls of lamas and nuns are not led to the *rumlyang* but conducted through the *bardo* or purgatory. But for laymen ceremonies of both religions are held simultaneously; the lamas perform inside the house while the Mun does his ceremonies outside.

764 There are three alternative methods of disposing of a corpse;
766 it may be burnt, buried, or thrown into the river. Which method is adopted depends partly on the condition of the deceased and partly on the lama's horoscopes. The lamas and nuns are never buried; they are almost always burnt unless they die in the wet season, in which case their bodies are thrown into the river. Laymen are never burnt; whether they are buried or thrown into the river depends on the lama's horoscope; the greater number are buried. Young children should always be thrown into the river, but occasionally an exception is made; thus Patek's mother when she lost in rapid succession four children in infancy burnt the body of the last one in anger and as a protest at the way the supernaturals were treating her; but such behaviour is extremely uncommon.

764 As soon as a person dies the position in which he has expired

¹ Vide sub, p. 352-353.

764 While the corpse is in the house the people of that household must not eat salt or butter.

The corpse of a layman is also doubled up in the same way, but the hands are crossed on the breast and the head is allowed to flop. The body is put in a big openwork basket. Usually for a layman there is only one day's wait between death and burial, but occasionally people will wait three days. A layman also is instructed and advised by lamas, but at the same time the Mun who will perform the *sanglion* and any other benevolent people who know how to are helping the corpse on the road to the *rumlyang* by meditation—*munthen*.

ii

764 Before the body of a lama or nun is carried out of the house
766 a pyre must be prepared; this consists of a square pile about seven feet high, with eight layers of wood if the deceased is a man and nine if a woman. The pyre must be made of the wood of one of two designated trees and must not be composed of more than three trees; the first tree of all must be cut down by the nearest available male relation of the deceased. The place where the pyre is made and its direction in relation to the house of the dead man will have been indicated by the lamas' horoscope; there are about half a dozen burning and burial places around Lingthem in more or less every direction; they are all removed some way away from any habitation and are placed on uncultivable spurs of land. The hour at which the corpse should be removed and also the year of birth of the people carrying the corpse are designated by the horoscope.

The journey from the house to the pyre must be made without a break. The body is put on the pyre seated to face west—that is towards Kinchenjunga. If the dead person is a woman in an advanced state of pregnancy, just before the corpse is placed on the pyre or in the grave the body is ripped open so that the navel-cord is torn and the foetus is placed on the mother's lap. This can be done by anybody who has sufficient courage. Then all the male relations of the deceased stand at all four sides of the pyre and set fire to it simultaneously. If the corpse has left a widow or widower a portion of that person's hair is cut off and burnt at the same time as the body. It is essential that every piece of wood and bone should be burnt to ashes; if necessary the corpse will be broken up to this end. About 8 lbs. of butter, a big basket of rice and all sorts of other

DEATH

349

grain are burnt with the corpse; a sort of long-handled shovel is used to make these offerings and they are thrown on to the pyre a little at a time, the officiating lama counting out loud and finishing up with a shout. The lama counts up to five ten times, up to seven five times and up to eight ten times. A pig, or very occasionally an ox, is killed at the house and this is put on to the pyre as food for the corpse after the corpse has been consumed. This animal is not usually consumed completely but merely cooked; the people who gathered the wood for the pyre are given this meat as their fee; if there is no meat they are given money. The relations of the dead man must stay by the pyre until the ashes are quite extinct.

764

766 ●

All the unrelated people who have accompanied the family to the burning place are given a meal of rice, and a small gift of money—usually one or two annas—is given to a representative of each household present. Similar presents are also given to those who attend a burial if the mourners can afford it. On the way back from the disposal of a corpse a small bonfire is built for the mourners to jump over, and a knife or some other piece of iron is put in the doorway of the house for people to step over; both these precautions are taken to disinfect the mourners from the possible magical contagion of death.

[783]

Except that the corpse is not dressed and anointed in the house, but only when it is brought to the place designated for burial, the preliminaries for burial are exactly the same as those for burning. The corpse is carried in the basket to the burial place by one man, a near relation if possible; a husband must always carry his wife and a son his mother. As well as the friends and relations of the deceased a Mun accompanies the buriers. When the party arrive at the chosen site the corpse is placed on the ground and is washed and anointed with the mixture of butter, cloves, nutmeg and camphor, and wrapped in a new cloth which is arranged so as to cover the face. Then a circular grave about the height of a man is dug; a big stone is put at the bottom and the sides are lined with stones and four ropes are placed against the four corners. While these preparations are being made the surviving spouse or eldest son will stay by the corpse and talk to it saying: 'We are preparing this new house for you.' The body is put into the grave still sitting in the basket, orientated to face Kinchenjunga; then on the top of the grave and corpse is put a big flat stone and on the top of that four cooking stones supporting another flat stone. On the top of this is placed a little white stone which serves as an indication that the place is a

764

764 palaces'.³ In front of all these is placed a special plate of pottery made with nine handles; this is left empty. The ceremonial is the same as for Sandé *moong*.

If the deceased has met his death by violence, that is through Arot *moong*, the ceremony of Tikar Sangyour has to be performed. After a death by violence has occurred in a family the descendants should keep up the ceremony yearly for ever, for violent death is infectious and hereditary; it can also be performed apotropaically. The path by which a corpse, who has died violently, has been carried should be avoided; and at the *sanglion* of such people no raw meat is given, but only cooked meat, as raw meat will carry the infection. Tafoor performs this ceremony because his grandfather fell from a height and was drowned; so do Ongden, Nariya, the Mandal (although in his case this is precautionary) and many others.

764 On a block of wood one large and four small images of a horse
778 with a rider are made of millet powder coloured red. In front of this is a black image of the female supernatural Mamoo *moong*, and in front of her an inflated animal's bladder. In front of this again is a *chimi* and at the four corners are four pots containing respectively scrapings of iron, tree tips, poison, and water from five rivers. There are also small offerings of grain and various decorations. While the special sacred book is being read *cherkem* is offered. When the offering is carried out a torch is laid down on top of it facing in the same direction; on top of this are placed leaves of wormwood and a stone on top of that.

766 In the case of a child dying before the age of about ten none of the ceremonies described above are performed nor is a *sanglion* made for it. Instead of these the ceremony of Dek Flee is performed by a Mun three days after death. For this ceremony a goat is required and also a tray covered with a black cloth on which is put samples of every sort of grain and a bundle of seven pieces of wood tied up with reed; besides that a bundle of elephant grass and other prickly plants are needed. The ceremony is performed inside the house.

The goat is tethered to a pole and a second rope made out of reed with three knots in it is tied round the goat's neck. This the Mun and all the members of the household in turn touch, and then the Mun throws the rope forward out of the house door three times. If by any chance the knot should point inwards there will be another

³ Thirteen, being an odd number, is lucky.

DEATH

353

death in the same household. After this a young boy takes some firebrands from the hearth some way away from the house; then the goat is led to the same place, stabbed to death and singed. After this the crops on the tray are *pék* over the inhabitants of the house and set down by the goat. Then the Mun takes the bundles of leaves already prepared in his right hand and a live hen in his left and *péks* the members of the household. The hen is then given to some neighbour to kill and eat; for neither the Mun nor any members of the household may eat anything used in this sacrifice. Then the intestines of the goat are cooked and mixed with rice; the Mun throws *chi* from a buttered cup to the devils, his assistant the chopped meat and rice.

When this is finished a wooden phallus (*niklyong-kup*) is set up between two stones on the way to the house; it is given hundreds of small cuts, each cut representing one year that the devil cannot pass. It is anointed with blood and *chi*. All that night the Mun communes—*munthen*—but he does not go into a trance. No food is given to the soul of a child. If the child was young he did not eat in real life and even if he did eat solid food, he was fed in his life time. [831]

iv

As has been said earlier, except for the expulsion of Sandé *moong* all these ceremonies are performed several days, or weeks, after the removal of the corpse. If it is possible, however, immediately after the corpse has been disposed of the *sanglion*—the speeding of the soul—is performed. Occasionally it is necessary to wait a few days while the requisite animals and food and materials which are involved are collected, for the *sanglion* is a very expensive ceremony. At this ceremony the mourners should not eat any of the meat provided, but should give it all away. The same term, *sanglion*, is used both for the lama's and the Mun's ceremonies and if both are performed they take place simultaneously; for lamas and nuns the Mun ceremony is not performed and for laymen the lama ceremony is much abbreviated. Another controlling detail as to the date when the *sanglion* is performed is the time necessary to prepare a sufficiency of *chi*. 764

The lama ceremony is as follows. First of all an image of the dead person is constructed in the following way: on a mat is drawn a circle of about ten inches across of powdered grain, with nine 764 778

LIVING WITH LEPCHAS

159¹⁰⁸

531 but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-
874 darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

532

792 Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

159

622

775

I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

● [166]

LIVING WITH LEPCHAS

251 174

415

also used for cooking rice. It is sometimes the custom to pickle corpses when, for instance, it is desired to postpone burial until some auspicious day. Large copper vessels, as big as a barrel, are used for this purpose; in Lingtem there were only two. These belonged to the Mandal, who kindly lent us one to store our water! It was near to the time of departure, however, before I realised their proper function. The Mandal assured us that, in point of fact, no corpse had ever been stored in our particular pot; but I feel sure that he thought we were being unduly squeamish. Perhaps we were.

513 Both rooms of a house are normally used for sleeping, but there is some sort of idea that if the inner room contains an altar (which is not always the case) it should be slept in only by Lamas: this rule, however, like many others, seems to be disregarded. Only the outer clothing is removed at night, and the people sleep on the floor. There is little attempt at privacy; nor indeed would this be possible where as many as fifteen people, as was the case in Tafoor's house for instance, have to be accommodated in two small rooms. This is perhaps an extreme instance; but it is unusual, except in the case of an elderly childless couple, to find less than four or five people occupying one room.

291 Men wear a pair of loosely-cut cotton shorts and a cotton shirt of Tibetan pattern. The shorts are made unnecessarily large in the waist, the surplus being folded over and tucked in in order to keep them up. Both these articles are made

[437] from machine-made material, and are usually obtained (at exorbitant prices) from Hindu shopkeepers in Mangen.

On top of them they generally wear the Lepcha *dum-dyum*, an attractive home-spun garment woven from imported white cotton with a typical striped design in red, blue, and

[438] yellow. This is no longer much made in Lingtem, and is usually obtained from some other Lepcha village. The Lingtem people seem to think they are better employed in tending their crops, and that it is really cheaper to buy their cloth rather than have the women make it at home. It seems a pity. The *dum-dyum* is not a made-up garment

764 On top of each grave a small hillock was made, with a tombstone (*cók bum*) in the middle; the grave thus marked was called *cók de*. The inside of the pit was carefully laid out with stones, so that the earth would not touch the corpse. The reason, why the dead were always turned towards Mt. Kanchenjunga was that they "should see the mountain, from which the Lepchas originated."

According to the custom of various localities, people were either buried in single graves, which were made in the fields, the jungle or—more frequently—close to a river, or on cemeteries, called *cók bróng lyang* or *cók bram lyang*. While the single graves were mostly destroyed in the course of time, the site of the ancient cemeteries is still often remembered.—Children below the age of ten were buried without the full ceremonial. Women, who died together with their child in childbirth, were buried jointly in one tomb.

When the funeral procession reached the freshly dug grave, the corpse was lowered into the pit and then, according to local custom, various things were laid near the dead. Besides the half seer of rice and the coin for *Fă gróng thing*, a bow and arrow were placed at the side of a man, or sometimes his knife (*ban*), the indispensable instrument of every Lepcha man. To a girl, her comb, and to a woman her sickle were given. Then a rope made of bamboo tissue and consisting of two parts, linked together with a loose sling, was lowered by a *Bong thing*, *Mán*, or a close relative into the grave. Shortly before the pit was closed, the person who held the rope called the deceased by his name, telling him that his "life spirit" is now being removed and that he should keep away from the living and not try to harm them; then he pulled hard on the rope, so that the sling opened and the lower half of the rope fell into the pit.

In order to close the grave, at first some stones were arranged in a kind of roof also above the basket, so that the corpse was surrounded now from all sides by a stone wall. Then earth was piled up, to form a small hillock and above the head of the dead, the tombstone was set. When heaping up this hillock, great care was taken to make its surface as smooth as possible, because three days after the funeral the relatives had to return to the grave, to see whether there were any traces on the hillock. If imprints of human feet were seen, it was regarded as a sign that the spirit of the dead had walked around the grave, but if traces of any animal were found, it was believed that they were left by the demon, who had caused the man's illness and death.—Then a grass whisk was taken and a magic circle was drawn with it around the tomb, to prevent any other soul from entering it. In some localities, if a man was buried, a "wild boars nest"—a small shelter in form of a nest, as made

775 the "Place of Gods" via a subterranean passage, the entrance of which
 823 is a cave in the vicinity of Monphu, while the Heemos claim, that the
 spirit enters this way near a rock called Sing Dang, in the vicinity of the
 village Samdong. A different cave is said to be the entrance for the
 dead of the Lingsomo clan. This cave is called Dret gang and it lies
 near the hamlet of Rabdentsi. A legend current among the Nam-
 phagmo Lepchas claims that the dead of this clan do not go to Mt
 Kanchenjunga, but to the Mennam mountain, which is specially
 sacred to this clan. They reach the mountain through a subterranean
 passage the entrance of which is the Phim Leb cave near
 Lingmo.

764 The funeral ceremonies end on the seventh day after the burial.
 At first, on the third day some rice, *ci*, and eggs were brought to the
 grave and after five more days had passed, a hen is sacrificed and then
 some prayers are said by a *Bong thing* or *Mün* in order to chase away
 all malignant spirits and to cleanse the house from all evil once more.

[554] There was no difference between the burial ceremonies of the *Bar
 jong mo*, the Lepcha aristocracy, and the *A den* or common people,
 and the dead of both groups were treated alike. Only the funeral
 rites for a *Mün* or *Bong thing* were performed in a different way.
 Even today, a *Bong thing* or *Mün* is not cremated, but mostly buried
 according to the old custom. In his house, the dead person is dressed
 into the full garment of a Lepcha sorcerer and his face is covered, as
 customary, with a white cloth and also the coin for *Fä gróng thing* is
 placed on his forehead. Around the body, all his magical instruments
 and drugs are spread out, the latter being kept in flat, closed baskets.
 Furthermore, a small ladder—"to reach with its help the *Rüm lyang*"—
 dried fish and birds, the beak or at least some other part of a crane,
 the beak of a hornbill and numerous baskets containing various food-
 stuffs are laid all around the corpse. The body is later placed on a
 bamboo stretcher, together with all objects enumerated above and
 carried out by the door,—and not by an opening in the wall or floor,
 as done at the funeral of a common man. Then the body is carried to
 the grave and placed in the pit in a sitting position. On the left and
 right sides of the dead two magical sticks (*ceng pä ting*),¹⁸ as used by the
 sorcerer during his lifetime, are placed and then also all the various
 paraphernalia, which had been brought on the stretcher, is laid in the
 grave.

The rites which follow are just like those performed at the funeral
 of common people. After the ceremony of calling back the *Müh
 nyam* has been carried out, also the spirit of a deceased *Mün* or *Bong
 thing* is conducted to the *Rüm lyang*, to join the spirits of his ancestors.

286 --characteristic Lepcha patterns. The threads used for the weaving
 [386] of cloth were formerly dyed with vegetable matter, of which likewise
 a few samples were brought along. Among the articles of clothing
 291 there is a complete woman's costume with the pertinent ornaments:
 301 two large needles connected by a silver chain, a pair of earrings set
 with corals, as well as two necklaces -- one mainly of turquoise and
 the other consisting of corals and blue glass beads. A hat made of
 reed and types of nettle and a pair of men's earrings decorated with
 turquoises were acquired as especially characteristic articles of the
 garb formerly customary for Lepcha men.

534 [270] As far as musical instruments are concerned, the collec-
 tion comprises three flutes of varying size -- one of which is a double
 flute -- a jewsharp, a gong with wooden drumsticks, as well as two
 old war drums whose cylinders consist of copper. They were presented
 [43] by bs Tan hdzin rnam rgyal, the sixth king of Sikkim (born 1769,
 ascended the throne in 1780, died in Lhasa in 1793) to the Lepcha
 chieftain of Sukmi, who bore the Tibetan title of "Döngpön"
 (r dzong dpon, "bailiff"), as an acknowledgment of faithful war service.

756 A few especially valuable articles of the collection are parts of
 [52] the equipment of a Mun priestess (a pouch with a carrying strap, deco-
 rated with eagles' claws, bird bills, the teeth of wild animals, and
 shells; plumes serving as a headdress; and parts of a rosary with a
 bell) which had been handed down for about three centuries in the
 family of a well-known Mun priestess who died a few years ago: Norkit
 [46] Lepchani from the village of Seket. This equipment, of which only
 one similar specimen is known in Sikkim, was occasionally used by
 a Mun priestess in the king's palace at Gangtok during the ceremonies
 that take place annually in the night before the ceremony of the Lama
 dance in honor of the mountain god Gangs chhen mdzod lnga. In re-

756 gard to other objects used in the original pre-Buddhist religion of the
 771 Lepchas, which were likewise acquired, the following should be named:
 amulets, magic wands, little baskets for keeping substances for magic
 healing, a little scaling ladder [Steigbaum] used at the burial of the

● [76] Lepcha priests known as Bong thing, which was supposed to aid the soul
 of the Bong thing in its ascent to heaven -- one of the many evidences
 of the shaman ideas that are deeply rooted in the Lepcha religion --,
 a gong used by the Yaba priests, and paraphernalia for performing cere-
 monies in honor of the ancestral spirits, local divinities, and for the
 appeasement of the demons that were unleashed during the wars of
 the priests during which they used magic.